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The Blessings of Peace:

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S E R M O N

Preached on the

GENERAL THANKSGIVING DAY.

(Price SIX-PENCE.)





The BLESSINGS of PEACE.

A
S E R M O N

PREACHED

IN HANOVER-SQUARE, *Newcastle*
upon Tyne,

ON THE

GENERAL THANKSGIVING DAY,

(THURSDAY, *May 5, 1763,*)

Appointed by ROYAL PROCLAMATION,

FOR THE

P E A C E

Concluded between

GREAT-BRITAIN, FRANCE, and SPAIN.

By S. LOWTHION. *K*

PUBLISHED by REQUEST.

Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem. VIRG.

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THE BLESSINGS OF PEACE.

S E R M O N

PREACHED

IN HARVEY'S CHURCH, LONDON

ON THE

GENERAL THANKSGIVING DAY



P R E F A C E

OF THE

CHURCH OF HARVEY, LONDON

BY J. O. W. H. I. O. N.

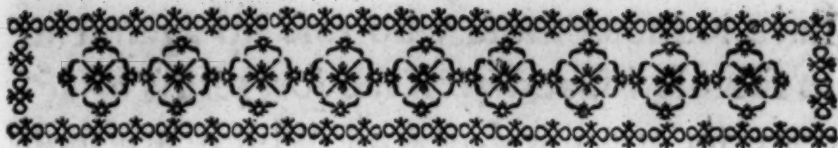
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IN THE CHURCH OF HARVEY, LONDON

ON THE GENERAL THANKSGIVING DAY

IN THE CHURCH OF HARVEY, LONDON


BY J. O. W. H. I. O. N.



The B L E S S I N G S *of* P E A C E.

P S A L. xxix. 2.

*The LORD will bless his people with
peace.*

 H A T man's heart must be in a great measure destitute of every social and benevolent affection, who does not feel sentiments of joy and congratulation arising in his breast upon this occasion : an occasion, which, if we reflect at all, cannot but bring to our remembrance, on the one hand, the uneasy and anxious apprehensions we laboured under for our country and constitution, and for every thing valuable and dear to us as *Britons*, and as *Protestants*, when attacked, by a powerful rival, in an unprovided situation ; and, on the other, the many and wonderful successes with which we have been favoured, during the late war, which
A have

have reduced those who rose up against us to submit to, and even sue for, terms of accommodation and peace; which are such as give us ground to hope our national tranquillity shall continue undisturbed thro' succeeding ages. To remain unaffected by such considerations as these, argues the most reproachful inattention and stupidity; and to refuse thankfully to acknowledge such signal blessings, whilst we are sensible of them, the highest ingratitude and impiety. The ROYAL proclamation, in virtue of which we, and our countrymen, are now assembled, devoutly adores the Divine goodness, in putting an end to the late bloody and expensive war; and piously owns that the great and public blessings, thence resulting, do call for public and solemn acknowledgments to ALMIGHTY GOD. And what can be more reasonable than that, having called upon God in the day of trouble, and he having delivered us, we should offer unto him thanksgiving; pay our vows unto the MOST HIGH; and glorify him from whom victory and salvation come? None, who admit the doctrine of a Divine providence,

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can call the reasonableness, or propriety, of this in question ; and therefore 'tis utterly unnecessary for me in this place, to undertake to prove it in form.

I CAN by no means think, that occasions of this nature are proper for *political* disputes and wranglings. 'Tis full as absurd to *give thanks*, as it is to *fast*, for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Whoever lays hold upon this opportunity to give vent to a malignant, turbulent, factious spirit, deserves ill of his king and country ; and vilely prostitutes his sacred office to the basest purposes. My endeavour shall be to improve your grateful sense of the blessings we enjoy ; and to exhort you properly to express that sense both towards GOD and men : with which view I have pitched upon those words of the *Psalmist*,—*The LORD will bless his people with peace.*

PROBABLY this and such like expressions, in their primary intent and meaning, carried in them something *peculiar* and *appropriated* ; and that by *his* people,
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the Psalmist means the *Jewish* nation, in contradistinction to all others. Such an appellation we are not authorized to arrogate to ourselves, to the exclusion of other states or kingdoms; tho' the consideration of *Britain's* having been the protectress of liberty, an asylum to the distressed and persecuted, the patroness of pure religion, and an inviolable observer of public faith, may justly inspire us with *special* confidence that GOD will continue to protect and bless us, if we continue to maintain and act upon the same honourable principles.

FROM my subject, there naturally arise the two following observations:

I. . . . THAT peace is a blessing:

II. . . . THAT the restoration and establishment of it ought to be attributed to the favourable disposals of GOD's over-ruling providence.

I. . . . MY first observation, viz. *that peace is a blessing*, will be universally and
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readily admitted: but it may, nevertheless, be of use to illustrate this in a few particulars. And,

I.) PEACE is a *blessing*, as men are thereby at liberty to pursue, without molestation or fear, those various occupations which are severally necessary for the comfortable subsistence and ornament of society. When men are commanded and compelled to beat their plow-shares into swords, and their pruning-hooks into spears; when those who should cultivate the ground are employed in laying waste it's productions; when architects, instead of rearing elegant edifices, or convenient habitations, are busied in erecting batteries from whence they may demolish villages, towns, and cities; when they who were wont to carry on commerce, and amicably exchange the produce of one climate for that of another, are occupied in making, or in guarding against, hostile invasions; a country must put on a dreary and desolate appearance. In what a dismal situation are those places, where the depredations and ravages of war have actually obtained;

tained; being almost without inhabitants or houses, the fields and gardens converted into camps, and the pastures destitute of flocks and herds? And even countries which have been so happy as to escape these, have been uncomfortably affected, by being deprived of laborious and useful hands, by having their attention diverted to foreign affairs, or by being kept in suspense as to the machinations and designs of their enemies. During such a state of things, a community is in some degree of confusion; and, from a kind of uncertainty who may reap the fruits of it, a spirit of industry subsides. But, when peace is restored, things put on a quite different face: the husbandman betakes himself to agriculture; the mechanic to his useful art; and the mariner to fair and friendly traffic. Men apply themselves with a peculiar activity and ardor to repairing the damages they may have sustained, and putting things in (at least) as good a posture as they were before. The prospect of security gives new life and vigor: and, with an honourable emulation, every one strives to outdo his neighbour in rectifying what

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what may have been thrown into disorder, and effacing all the appearances of hostile injuries.

AND 'tis very easy to see, that a time of war must have a very unfavourable influence upon the finer arts. Whatever occasion martial feats may give to the exercising of these afterwards, most certain it is that they delight in tranquillity; and can never be successfully pursued in a state of tumult and perturbation. Farther;

2.) PEACE is a blessing, as a free communication is thereby opened between neighbouring nations to mutual advantage. As one man is endowed with these talents, another with those, disposing and qualifying them for different stations and employments; so different climates have their respective and peculiar productions, which (if not absolutely necessary) are highly agreeable, and contribute greatly to the pleasure and elegance of human life. An amicable interchange of these is very desirable: but this a state of hostility interdicts; by which commerce is discouraged,
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and mankind mutually abridged of that enjoyment and happiness they might otherwise experience. Nor is this all : by being deprived of intercourse with their neighbours, people are apt to contract narrow notions, and sentiments inconsistent with that *general* benevolence which is the highest honor, perfection, and felicity of human nature. As a recluse has little relish for society, and is seldom entertaining in company ; so are those people's minds apt to be under the influence of an illiberal cast, who have no acquaintance with men or manners of any nation but their own. We are very prone to be unduly fond of usages to which we have been long accustomed, and of principles which have been early inculcated. Nothing can more effectually remove these prejudices than conversing freely with those, whose customs and way of thinking may be somewhat different. Travelling has ever been allowed one of the best methods of improving men's understandings, polishing their manners, and dilating their hearts. I wouldnot be understood, by this, as recommending it to our *British* youth to form their religious or

political sentiments according to a *French* model: their constitution is, in both respects, perfectly heterogeneous to ours; being, in the former, a shameful corruption of Christianity, and a most iniquitous usurpation on the rights of conscience; and, in the latter, an unlimited monarchy, permitting the most arbitrary and tyrannical proceedings: from both of which every judicious, honest *Briton* will ardently beseech ALMIGHTY GOD, of his great goodness, to deliver us. What is intended by the above hints amounts only to this;—
‘as, by an exchange of their respective commodities, different nations may reciprocally oblige and benefit one another; so may they, likewise, mutually contribute to the enlargement of one another’s knowledge, and the refinement of one another’s morals.’
Add to this, that men are very apt to indulge an unfavourable opinion of those people with whom they are engaged in hostilities. This is, usually, the case in petty quarrels or contests; both sides imagining themselves aggrieved, and claiming satisfaction. ‘Tis somewhat difficult to maintain

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tain undissembled and fervent charity towards those with whom we are obliged to contend; especially when all the arts of policy are employed mutually to irritate and inflame. But, when peace is restored, national animosities subside; humanity regains its influence; and the consideration of our common nature makes us disregard all accidental distinctions: friendship succeeds to enmity, and a good correspondence to hostile vigilance and jealousy.

3.) PEACE is a blessing, because a period is thereby put to the effusion of human blood. Dreadfully destructive are national quarrels and contentions! and melancholy it is to think how many have fallen a sacrifice during the late war. How many have been rendered widows and fatherless in the prosecution of it! What family, almost, has not suffered in this respect! and, in the midst of public rejoicings, been obliged to mourn in private! When we consider how much blood has been shed, and how many lives lost, it becomes us to rejoice with trembling. The joy,

joy, on account of some of our most signal victories, was damped by the death of those, by whose courage and conduct they were obtained. The truth is, the most prosperous issues of war are attended with very mortifying considerations to a humane, benevolent mind ; because usually accompanied with havock and bloodshed : and peace upon reasonable terms, is always grateful, as putting a stop to these. And it may justly excite and enliven our joy, to reflect, that our brave country-men, our relatives, friends or acquaintance, who do survive, are no longer exposed to the fatigues and hazards of war ; that they may now, together with us, enjoy the pleasures of public tranquillity ; and that the instruments of death shall be converted into, or exchanged for, the harmless and beneficial ones of agriculture, trade, or science. Once more ;

4.) PEACE is a blessing, as it allows people leisure to examine into, and rectify, any thing which may be irregular or uneligible in their own constitution. During

a time of war, the attention of the administration is naturally and commendably engaged in consulting for the public safety; and it would be acting a very unworthy part to endeavour to divert or interrupt it, by objecting things less important and urgent. The besieged ought to attend to the strength of their walls and the goodness of their fortifications, and not to the commodiousness or elegance of the interior buildings. But, being freed from all danger from *abroad*, it may be examined what posture things are in at *home*; and whether some things might not be altered for the better. And why may we not hope for something of this kind from our governours, peace being thoroughly established? Why may we not flatter ourselves with the prospect, that it shall be amongst the glories of this reign to carry the Reformation to greater perfection; to remove all manner of occasion of uneasiness to honest minds; to take away all temptation to prostitute a sacred institution; and to rescue our common Christianity from every incumbrance, which may obstruct it's progress, and

and influence, or obscure it's native simplicity? Why may we not flatter ourselves that our governours and legislators, being now happily disengaged from the cares and solicitude necessarily attending on war, will, in their great wisdom, fall upon some expedients to remedy the tedious delays of legal processes; and prevent the law from becoming intolerably burthensome and expensive? Why may we not presume some methods will be devised to reduce the national debt, which has been unavoidably increased by the late troubles; and free his Majesty's subjects from some of those taxes which the exigences of the times rendered necessary? Why may we not expect that all extravagances will be retrenched; and useful arts and sciences be encouraged, instead of suffering a few individuals to swim in affluence, or keeping up useless and expensive sinecures?

THUS have I endeavoured to point out some of the signal advantages and blessings of peace:—It leaves men at liberty to pursue, without molestation or fear, those various occupations which are severally necessary

sary for the comfortable subsistence and ornament of society;—it opens a free communication between neighbouring nations for their mutual benefit;—it prevents the farther effusion of blood;—and leaves a people at leisure to reform any thing which may be amiss amongst themselves: and I now proceed to my second observation: viz.

II. . . . T H A T the restoration and establishment of peace ought to be attributed to the favourable disposals of God's over-ruling providence. It was an observation of one eminent for wisdom, that — *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.* Prov. xxi. 1. 'Tis but too usual for people to ascribe their successes to their own strength and prudence; to the wisdom of their counsels, and the vigilance, activity, and resolution of those who are to put them in execution: but we are instructed to say, let our preparations be what they will, that safety is of the LORD. To limit our views to (what are commonly called) *second causes,*

causes, or (to speak more properly) to *instruments* in the hand of providence, is robbing God of that glory which is due to him as the sovereign of the universe, and having an unalienable dominion and authority over all the creatures he has made: which is a species of ingratitude and impiety severely censured and condemned in sacred scripture. The series of events, during the late war, abundantly prove the doctrine here asserted. The amazing manner in which the *British* spirit was roused, after some ignoble and discouraging repulses; the vigor with which it exerted itself under the conduct of a prudent, firm, and truly public-spirited administration; those rapid and uninterrupted successes with which the British arms were attended; the continual support of the brave King of *Prussia*, though, according to human appearance, in danger of being swallowed up by his enemies; the humbling *SPAIN*, (after its having insidiously taken part with *FRANCE*) by taking one of its principal harbours in the West-Indies, tho' deemed almost inaccessible; these, (I say) with many other

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events, the particulars of which it will be the business and glory of *British* history to relate and transmit to posterity, are enough to make one stand astonished: and, in truth, are not to be accounted for without having recourse to providence, and taking in its favourable concurrence. I do not say, that we are authorized to assert any *miraculous* interpositions: but they who do not discern the special influences of Heaven in these important revolutions, must be chargeable with very great inattention, if not with something worse. Nor does this doctrine at all detract from the merit, or eclipse the honor, of those illustrious men who plann'd or executed these schemes: it does not deny that unanimity in counsel and harmony in conduct, that prudence and resolution in action, that firmness in danger, and precautions against future stratagems, are the most likely means of repulsing an enemy, and reducing them to reason: it does not refuse those, who have maintained and exerted these, the honourable appellation of *Patriots* or *Heroes*; nor at all dissuade from recompencing them
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whilst living, or endeavouring to perpetuate their memory by the most lasting marks of approbation and esteem: all it requires is, that they consider themselves, and be regarded by others, as agents under God; to whose controul all things are subject, and at whose disposal all things are, whether in Heaven or in Earth: which is not more agreeable to the principles of religion, than to the dictates of reason and sound philosophy. Whatever is brought about by *secondary* or *instrumental* causes, is brought about in virtue of that power and efficacy with which the God of nature originally endowed them, and which they retain, not by any power inherent in themselves, but by his constant energy and all-sustaining influences; and, therefore, whatever is thus effected must be ultimately resolved into his constitution and providential government. 'Tis true, we know not the *manner* in which the Omnipresent Spirit influences the minds of intelligent creatures, or overrules their actions to the accomplishing such or such purposes; but our ignorance is no proof that he does not do so: nay,

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the affirmative must be admitted, unless we will exclude him altogether from the government of the universe; which is, in fact, denying his existence.

GIVE me leave to subjoin a reflection or two from what has been advanced.

I.) IF peace, with all its blessings, is to be ascribed to GOD's providence, 'tis easy to see where our gratitude and thankfulness should ultimately terminate. No doubt, we are greatly indebted to those who employed their heads and hands, who faced dangers and death, in order to repel the encroachments of avarice and ambition, and to secure to us, and transmit to posterity, our just rights and liberties. Ever revered be the memory of his late SACRED MAJESTY! who, with inflexible integrity, paternal affection, and princely fortitude, asserted his own, and his subjects' rights, when insolently invaded by a neighbouring Monarch; and, tho' far advanced in life, chose rather to undergo the fatigues and perplexities, with which an open war must

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unavoidably be accompanied, than suffer the dignity of his crown to be insulted, tamely permit depredations upon any part of his dominions, or leave those countries, of which he had long been the head and father, in a disconcerted abject state. Most highly honoured be his ROYAL GRAND-SON! who succeeded him with as much joy as was consistent with the concern a grateful people felt upon being deprived of a King whom they had, for many years, held in the highest esteem; and whose reign has been rendered as illustrious by brave achievements as the time could well admit of; and is now rendered eminently so by the restoration of peace. Thanks to our noble and honourable senators, for that unanimity and chearfulness with which they granted, year after year, such supplies as the exigences of the times required. Thanks to all honest patriots who consulted our safety; and to those intrepid commanders, with all under their command, who have spread the fame and terror of the *British* Arms throughout the known world; and gained immortal honor to themselves
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by doing the most signal service to their country. These are men whom it hath pleased God to honor; and for us to refuse them proper homage, respect, and praise, would be highly ungrateful and indecent. But still we ought to remember that they are but men; and that whatever they have atchieved has been in dependence upon God's providence, and by his assistance: him, therefore, we should regard as the prime efficient cause, and the ultimate object of our grateful praise. And if any one should ask,—“How may
“a thankful temper towards ALMIGHTY
“God most properly express itself, upon
“occasions of this nature?” I answer;—by such acts of homage and worship as we have been this day engaged in, by celebrating his praise in the public assembly, and exalting him in the midst of the congregation; this is honor which should not be given to another, and praise which he claims and appropriates to himself:—by acts of beneficence, causing others, by our means, to share in that prosperity, on account of which we profess ourselves so
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joyful : to undo heavy burdens and free the oppressed ; to deal bread to the hungry, kindly admit the poor into our houses, and cover such as are destitute of clothing ; accords as well with a day of festivity and thanksgiving, as with a day of fasting and humiliation : — and by leading quiet and peaceable lives, in all godliness and honesty ; remembering that G O D is not the author of confusion but of peace and order. Other expressions of gratitude may be innocent, and prudent too ; as tending to diffuse a proper spirit amongst the populace : but if we would approve ourselves truly thankful unto G O D, we must be found living habitually in his fear ; doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with him.

2.) I F peace be so great a blessing, every one of us, in our respective stations, should do what we can to preserve and promote it. Of what advantage will it be to us that we are at peace with foreign nations, if our own houses are infested with strife and dissention ? What great benefit can those towns or districts derive from pacific nego-

negotiations with neighbouring states, which are torn in pieces by intestine factions and tumults? What can it avail a nation to be in a state of amity with other communities, if they are at variance among themselves? 'Tis with pain one dwells upon any thing which may damp the general joy: but who can help observing that there are some amongst us who take pleasure in disturbing our peace? Who can hear, without concern, party-names, which were almost buried in oblivion, conjured up, and played off with so much malignity and virulence? Who can read, without displeasure, those scurrilous lampoons and satyrical invectives which have of late appeared and circulated freely in the kingdom? Who can view, without the most indignant resentment those indecent and audacious representations, stigmatizing characters of the first rank, impeaching their virtue, and exposing even Majesty itself to contempt and scorn? They who are chargeable with such practices as these, may reasonably be interrogated in some such manner as this:

“ God has been graciously pleased to grant

“ us

“ us rest from our enemies, round about ;
“ and why will not you suffer us to be at
“ peace amongst ourselves? What aileth
“ ye, you abusive scribblers, that ye are so
“ very angry? Do you really apprehend
“ the state is in danger from the admini-
“ stration? Point out that danger by plain
“ and positive alligations or arguments;
“ and do not think to put us off with
“ flirts of wit, sarcastical flourishes, or
“ declamatory harangues, instead of these?
“ What view have you in those satyrical re-
“ flections you have so liberally cast upon
“ those in power? Is it to guard your
“ country-men from being imposed upon
“ and abused? first show them what
“ ground there is for apprehending im-
“ position and abuse. Is it to wriggle
“ yourselves into posts of honor and pro-
“ fit? give society some better proof that
“ you are qualified for these than your
“ having a knack at scurrility. Do you
“ write libels for bread? then are you the
“ most abject and ignominious pensioners;
“ and with the worst grace imaginable do
“ you reproach others with their *poverty*.

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“ Are you stimulated by foreign emissaries
 “ to sow the seeds of dissention amongst
 “ us? what, then, are you less than perfid-
 “ ious traitors? Did you not lately join
 “ with your fellow-subjects in the warm-
 “ est congratulations to our Most Gracious
 “ Sovereign upon his succeeding to the
 “ crown, and in the most fluent expressions
 “ of affection and loyalty? how, then, can
 “ you, so soon, use all your arts to foment
 “ faction and discord? Whence have you
 “ the assurance to make use of names of
 “ distinction which the laws have abolish-
 “ ed, and which good policy requires
 “ should be utterly extinguished? By what
 “ kind of arguments do you prove that they
 “ who are born in the *northern* part of our
 “ island must be fools or knaves, or both?
 “ Who gave you authority to dictate to
 “ his Majesty whom he should chuse for
 “ his servants? By what law are any of his
 “ faithful subjects excluded the privilege
 “ of standing in this relation, if approved
 “ by him, and capable of doing their duty?
 “ Will you, under the specious pretence
 “ of *patriotism*, endeavour to unhinge go-
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“vernment, imbroid society, and alienate
“the affections of *Britons* from that illustrious family, to which under G O D,
“they owe every blessing they enjoy; and
“on which their hopes are fixed for the
“continuance and security of their happy
“constitution? If this be your design, we
“wish you may, and we hope you will, be
“defeated in it: and any restraint laid upon
“your malicious licentiousness shall
“not be deemed the least infringement
“upon our liberty.” But, to leave these
incendiaries to the fruits of their own devices;

3.) B E I N G blessed with peace, let us guard against those temptations to which it may particularly expose us. Every state, or condition, has its trials; and those attending upon a prosperous one are not fewer, nor less powerful, than such as accompany adversity. As it was our duty, in times of trouble and danger, to guard against, and discourage, a timid and desponding spirit; so it is now to be watchful that we do not indulge to a spirit of security

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ty and slumber, indolence and effeminacy. We may, by our own thoughtlessness and folly, convert this blessing into a curse. The quarter from which our stability seems to be most formidably threatned is luxurious riot and debauchery; for from hence, by a natural and necessary consequence, proceed distressed circumstances, perplexity of mind, secret discontent, and a liability to be corrupted; as also pusillanimity and irresolution. If we suffer ourselves to sink into such a state as this, dissolution and ruin must ensue. *Britons* will act wisely in carefully cherishing a love of liberty, and that heroic magnanimity, for which they are so justly celebrated in ancient history, and by which they have so eminently signalized themselves of late years: for experience has shown, how little the *public faith* of some nations (pardon the insinuation) is to be trusted to. As natives and inhabitants of this happy island, let us be ambitious to be called by no other appellation than that of *Britons*; as a *body politic*, the grateful and unanimous *subjects* of GEORGE THE THIRD; and, as a *religious*

ligious community, the disciples and followers of CHRIST; or, in one word, CHRISTIANS. Considering how great things the LORD has done for us, let us serve him in truth, with all our heart. Then may we reasonably hope for the continuance of his favourable providence, that upon all our glory there shall be a constant defence, and that ages yet unborn shall rejoice in the happy fruits of the wisdom and virtue of their ancestors.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisable, the only wise GOD, be honor and glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

P. 25. l. 8. for *Alligations* read *Allegations*.

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